

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee

February 23, 2017

Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)

**Governor's H.B. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE
BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS
THEREFORE**

Good afternoon Senator Osten and Senator Formica, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is John Greene and I am a registered voter in Norwich. I am here today to testify against the proposed cuts in the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services budget. I am one of the many faces affected by mental health and addiction issues in the state and I have struggled with both for much of my life. I am also here to voice my strong support for organizations such as Reliance Health that receive the same funds you are proposing to cut. Reliance Health provides me with programs and services that are critical to my life and my recovery.

Today, I am here to tell you how important being a member of Reliance Health is to me. At Reliance Health, I am in a program called Penobscot Place which has helped me work on my recovery. This program has helped me develop coping skills, build my sober support network, attend AA meetings, and has been instrumental for me to come back from being an addict to being myself again. Penobscot Place has helped me to become a person in the world again and engage in life around me rather than just isolating in my room. My groups at Penobscot Place are the best part of my day and help me to stay sober and focus on my recovery.

Reliance Health also helps in other ways such as seeing a Nurse Practitioner for my medical needs and to help me deal with cravings. I see a therapist weekly to help with my mental health and to cope with everyday life. I also have a coordinator who helps me in other ways such as getting to appointments or around in the community—especially to places where the buses don't go.

The cuts you want to make to the budget would really make it hard for Reliance Health to continue to provide the services and programs to the people who need it—like me. Without this place (Reliance Health), I would still be outside the world; not engaging and living in hell (as I call it). I really need to be there. If you take these programs away, I don't know what to do. Not only have these programs brought me back to being myself, but people there have become my mentors. Thank you for this opportunity to speak and share my experience with you.